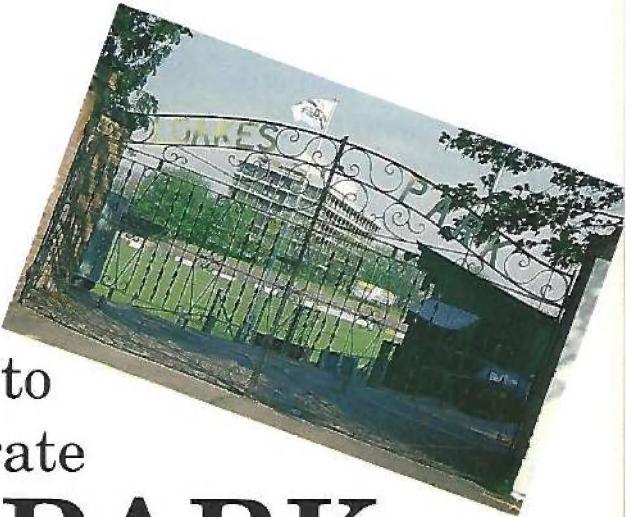


FOUNDED 1884

Wycombe Wanderers Football Club



Official
brochure to
commemorate

LOAKES PARK

the home of Wycombe Wanderers from 1895 - 1990

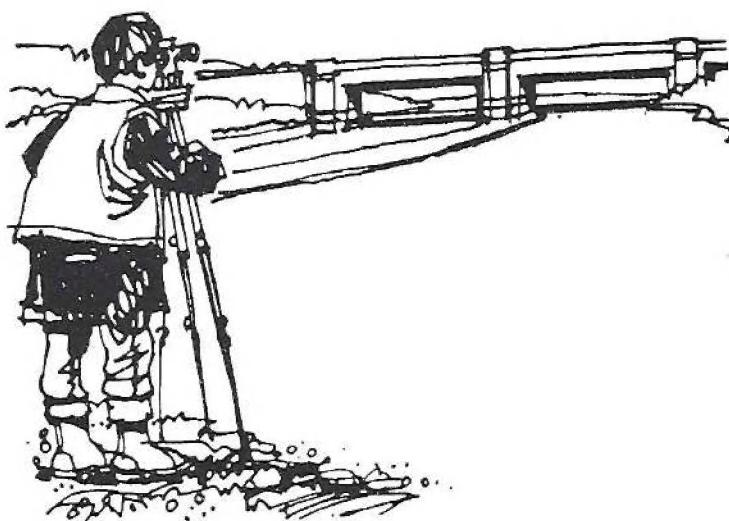


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"Wycombe Wanderers would like to thank Pat McKenna and John Lehane for their generous sponsorship of this brochure as well as their expertise in connection with the Adams Park development".



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WYCOMBE WANDERERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Adams Park, Hillbottom Road,
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Bucks. HP12 4HJ
Telephone: 0494 472100
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Isthmian League Cup:	Winners 1984-85
Berks & Bucks Senior Cup:	Winners 23 times

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wycombe Wanderers would like to thank the following individuals for contributing articles and photographs for this brochure:-

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Dave Finch	Brian Lee
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R. Goodearl	Steve Peart
Dick Harris	Allan Robson
Alan Hutchinson	B. White

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FOREWORD

Wycombe Wanderers F.C. have played at Loakes Park since 1895 and in May of last year the Club relocated to its new purpose built stadium, Adams Park, just 2½ miles away at Sands on the outskirts of High Wycombe. The new ground and community facility has a capacity of 6,000.

Thousands upon thousands of football followers will have fond memories of the famous sloping pitch at Loakes Park and of the important matches played on it. The Club won the Isthmian League Championship on several occasions, reached the F.A. Amateur Cup Final, entertained First Division opposition at home in the F.A. Cup Competition and hosted Amateur International fixtures on behalf of The Football Association.

Wycombe Wanderers F.C. have toured many parts of the world and produced many players who have gained Amateur International Caps for the "home" countries. The Club continues to be a credit to the present non-League football structure, having completed yet another season in the prestigious G.M. Vauxhall Conference.

Former full International stars George Best, Martin O'Neill and Mark Lawrenson joined in the celebration as Wycombe Wanderers F.C. bade farewell to Loakes Park, a crowd approaching 5,000 watching the Club mark the end of their 95 years at the ground with a special commemorative match that produced thirteen goals.

May the Club continue to be administered wisely and efficiently and enjoy more successes on the field at their new home.

You have my very best wishes.

Bert Millichip
Bert Millichip

Chairman - The Football Association

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Monday, 7th May 1990 now seems in the long distant past, but cannot be forgotten. After 95 years on that non-League ground with the famous sloping pitch the curtain was called that day with the Martin O'Neill International XI.

There are probably many, many memories in all our minds from Wycombe's days at Loakes Park whether they be of a specific League or Cup match, a particular team or individual player, a moment of great success and joy or a moment of failure and despair. All of these memories will, I am sure, leave all of us with warm and fond feelings for Loakes Park. Monday, 7th May was an ordeal and none of us really wanted to lock the gates and say goodbye that evening.

Many of you will have heard me say, however, that we must look to the future which now lies ten minutes away at our new stadium, Adams Park. Once through the gates, a look at the stadium in its splendid setting makes all of us feel proud of this great achievement. The Town too, should be proud of having a ground and club which is the best in non-League football and indeed, the envy of many Third and Fourth Division clubs.

The future looks bright, but myself and our Manager are also fully aware that the details need to be right on as well as off the field and in that respect Martin will be trying to provide you with a team to fit the stadium.

Some of you may be coming to Adams Park for the first time after reading this brochure and to you I extend a warm welcome and suggest that you enjoy all the facilities the Club is able to offer. To our regular supporters, thank you for your loyalty - it's good to see you again.

I have a strong inbuilt desire that we are known as a "family club" where whole families are made welcome and can watch in comfort and, in this respect, I am particularly grateful to our matchday mascot and family stand sponsor, MFI Furniture Centres Ltd. I am sure you too, like to see lots of young faces enjoying football at Adams Park.

Finally, my thanks to Allan Robson our Commercial Manager and the many other contributors for preparing this brochure to commemorate our beloved Loakes Park from the first season, 1895, to the last, 1991.

Kind regards

Ivor L. Beeks
Ivor L. Beeks

Chairman - Wycombe Wanderers Football Club

"Wycombe Wanderers are indebted to the following companies, all of whom were major contractors and advisers in the Adams Park development and who have generously sponsored this brochure to ensure that the history of Loakes Park is recorded for the enjoyment of the Club's supporters".

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Neary & Picot, are pleased to have been The Building Contractors at the Adams Park Stadium. We wish Wycombe Wanderers every success in their new home.
John & Tony

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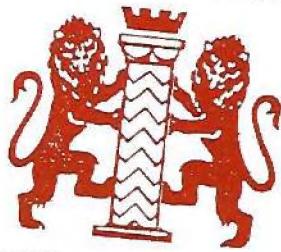
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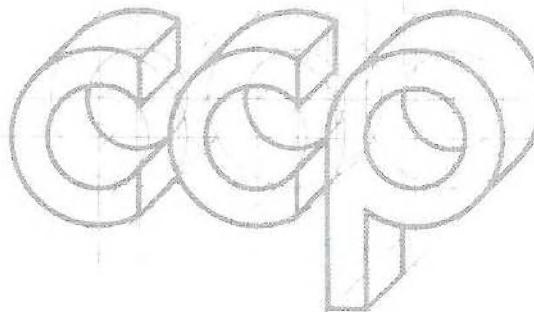
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We are pleased to have been involved in the civil and structural engineering design of this project and wish Wycombe Wanderers every success with their new stadium and future ambitions.

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1895/96 - THE FIRST SEASON AT LOAKES PARK

by Steve Peart

It was not until eleven years after their formation in 1884 that Wycombe Wanderers moved to Loakes Park, their home for the next 95 years.

The Club began life playing on the public ground on the Rye but because of the difficult playing conditions (the land was used for grazing and there was fierce competition for pitches) they moved to Spring Meadow on the London Road in 1893. After two seasons the Club attempted to buy four adjoining acres but the asking price of £600 plus £200 for levelling was clearly beyond the Club's means. It was then suggested that they play on the meadow known as Loakes Park, part of the Carrington Estate. An agreement was reached with Mr Gardener (tenant of Loakes Park), Mr Wertheimer (tenant of Wycombe Abbey), and Lord Carrington allowing the Club to use the land rent free for the first year. In those days the playing surface was rough and stony, with a considerable slope which was not "levelled" until 1900. There was no Queen Alexandra Road at that time and where the College of Higher Education now stands were gardens and greenhouses for the use of the Abbey tenants. Changing rooms did not exist and the players had to use the Red Lion Hotel in the High Street, although the Nags Head Public House on the London Road remained as the Club's headquarters.

With the aid of excerpts from the match reports in the South Bucks Free Press, we take a look at that historic first season.....

On Saturday, 7th September 1895 Wycombe Wanderers played their first ever match on Loakes Park, with Park Grove as their opponents. The

weather was "sultry and uncomfortable for both players and spectators" although this did not stop the latter from turning out in their hundreds. Before the game they were issued with notices warning against making "uncalled remarks against the referee both on and off the ground". Offenders would be reported to the Football Association. It was about 4.50 pm when Lloyd for Wycombe kicked off and the first goal on the new ground was scored for the home side by Buchanan "with a hot'un". Although the visitors got the ball into the net in the second-half it was ruled offside and the Wanderers ran out 1-0 winners.

The Wycombe team that day was:- J. Ball, (goal); H. Turner and A. Hutchinson, (backs); F. C. Keen, R. Collier and G. Stevens, (half-backs); F. W. Abbott and W. Buchanan, (left-wing); W. Lloyd, (centre); F. G. Jennings and G. Wooster, (right-wing).

The referee was:-

Mr J. Hazell, (R. A. High Wycombe)

The linesmen were:-

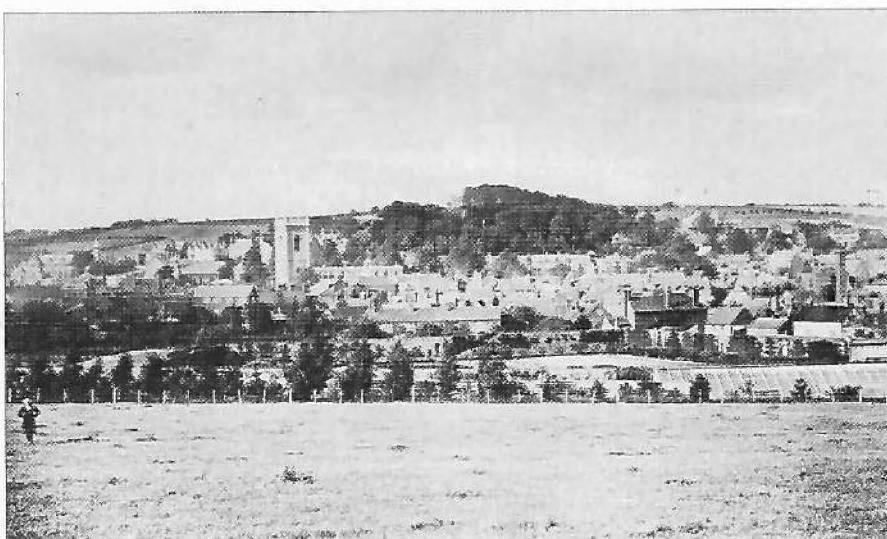
Mr J. Clark (Wycombe Wanderers) and Mr W. Chalkley (Park Grove). Further home victories followed against Romford (6-4) and Southern Leaguers, Old St Stephens (3-1) prompting The Evening News and Post to declare that "the chair metropolis is one of the rising football centres in Berks and Bucks." The Football Sun stated that "the Wanderers have just entered paradise by taking to the ground granted by Earl Carrington and Mr Gardener."

Having disposed of Slough 4-1 the previous week at the Dolphin Stadium, the Civil Service were then narrowly defeated 2-1. West Ham Garfield became the first visitors to

gain a result at Loakes Park, drawing 1-1, before Wycombe faced their first big game of the season with an F.A. Cup First Qualifying Round tie against Wolverton L & N.W.R from the Southern League. "Great enthusiasm and a record gate! A grand game! Hard lines for the Wanderers! Lucky Wolverton!" declared the headlines in the local paper. It was the Wanderers' first ever match in the F.A. Cup and Loakes Park was "in the pink of condition for which the ground committee deserved a word of praise; Wolverton expressed themselves highly pleased with it. The attendance of spectators that assembled was far and away beyond anything that had been seen at a football match in Wycombe before, and for impartial behaviour they, too, are entitled to a little praise." The first-half was goalless with the "Wolves" having the better of it and shortly after the restart the visitors went two goals up. Wycombe responded well but, "amidst the cry of 'off-side'", Wolverton further increased their lead. "It was undoubtedly a bad decision", asserted the Free Press, "and looked an oversight more than anything else." The Wanderers now re-organised the attack and it had the desired effect as two goals in two minutes put the visitors on the rack. The post and crossbar were struck as shots rained in but all to no avail as the North Bucks side held on for a 3-2 win.

The following week saw the first away trip of the season for a match against Tottenham Hotspur Reserves at their original home of Northumberland Park. This match was arranged on the spur of the moment to give the players a break from playing at home every

Saturday. "A good muster of spectators" included some former Wycombe residents and the Wanderers were "repeatedly cheered by this contingent whenever they did creditable work." The visitors found themselves two goals up at half-time in spite of some unsportsmanlike behaviour by Spurs which brought forth the cry from the pavilion of "have him turned off." The lead was stretched to 4-0 before the home team rallied, scoring three goals in the last 20 minutes - "the semi-darkness was the only reason for the Wycombe custodian being beaten so easily". The Free Press "Gossip" column noted that the welcome voice of Captain Harper urging his forwards to shoot induced one spectator to remark, "Are the



Loakes Park before it became a Football Ground

Wanderers a professional team because I observe they have a trainer!" Comment is needless.

The following Saturday the Wanderers conferred to a 5-1 victory over Upton Park and then on Monday, 25th October, in the afternoon, Loakes Park saw the visit of the Amateur Cup holders, Middlesbrough, whilst on a Southern tour. It took a £15 guarantee to attract the North Easterners which was only just covered by the £16 gate receipts. In the first-half the home forwards showed signs of nerves as 'Boro took a 2-0 lead but the second-half saw a rally by Wycombe before going down 3-1. November signalled the start of the Amateur Cup trail with a Second Qualifying Round match at home to Newbury resulting in a 1-0 victory for Wycombe. The gate receipts of £15 11s 3d left £5 each for the two teams after expenses.

Chesham of the Southern League Division Two were the next opponents, in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup First Round. Wycombe had offered £8 for the match to be played at Loakes Park but £12 was asked for and refused. So the match was played at Chesham's "very peculiarly shaped ground" which was what is now the cricket ground below The Meadow. Wycombe were well on top in the first-half scoring through Buchanan but Chesham managed an equaliser before half-time. The home side quickly took the lead after the break in spite of the fact that the home linesman "was endeavouring to attract the Referee's attention to the fact that the ball had previously gone over the line". The same linesman later in the game tried to get Wycombe's Abbott "turned off the pitch because of his illegal boots", much to the annoyance of the away fans. To show how little spectator behaviour has changed, Harry Turner the Wycombe full-back, committed a heavy foul on a Chesham player and "the crowd hooted for some time, and a section of them subjected him to unpleasant remarks for the remainder of the game". The score remained at 2-1 and the Wanderers exited their second cup competition of the season.

The following Monday Loakes Park saw its first sight of women footballers as Captain Harper's enterprise in staging a North v South ladies match proved a great success. Over £18 was taken on the gate and "the crowd that assembled on Loakes Park was a large one, while a still larger number had a "free view" from Tom Burts Hill and the Barracks Road". The problem of the "free gallery" was not resolved until 1904 when the first section of the grandstand (the middle third of the completed one) was opened. "The play was of a very original order, only one or two of the

performers having advanced beyond the alphabet of the game; but they put any amount of spirit into it, and seemed to enjoy themselves as much as the spectators, who were very hilarious". The North ran out easy winners, four goals to nil.

After an easy 5-0 win against University College Hospital it was back to the Amateur Cup as the Wanderers took on the Royal Scots Fusiliers at home in the Third Qualifying Round. A close match was expected but Wycombe displayed their best form of the season to crush the soldiers 9-0.

Filled with confidence Wycombe travelled to Marlow for their last game of November on the famous Crown Ground down by the river. Oddly, it was the first time for some years that the teams had met. The large crowd of about 1,500 included 700-800 from Wycombe (similar figures would be expected nowadays for the same fixture!). It was a fast and exciting game and, goalless at the break, Marlow took the lead five minutes into the second-half. Wycombe quickly levelled the match through Abbott, "hats, umbrellas and sticks being waved enthusiastically in the air", only for Marlow to score late in the game. One of the Wycombe backs was heard to remark: "Now chaps; nine minutes to time; pull up" but Randell, the visitor's dashing winger, scored a dramatic last minute equaliser "amidst the greatest possible excitement". Another easy victory followed, 5-0 against 49th Regimental District, when keeper Jim "Chummy" Ball "during some of the latter moiety assisted the backs, so little were his services required in goal". The Wanderers then faced the second East Lancashire Regiment in the Final Qualifying Round of the Amateur Cup. Unable to get the game played at Loakes Park, "the Wycombe boys arrived at their journey's end at about 1.15 where they were met by a "friendly guide" who very politely took them over a route extending to about three miles, and a very rough country too. We would not suggest that this was done to "fag out" the Blues, but it looked as though "Tommy" was not particular how far he took the Wanderers". On arrival they found that the referee, appointed by the F.A., had adjudged the ground unfit for a cup tie. It was little wonder as "the goal-posts were quite a foot below the prescribed height and in the centre the bar was considerably lower. The turf was in a pitiable plight, and to use the words of the crowd, it needed to be let out for grazing for three months, and a steam roller on it for a like period, then perhaps a team might agree to play on it without protesting". Captain Harper lodged an official protest and it was agreed to play a friendly match which Wycombe won

3-2. The drama did not end there for afterwards the soldiers claimed the tie on the grounds that the Wanderers had not notified the protest properly but the F.A. decided that as the match had been played it must count as a cup tie - the fitness of the ground did not come into it. The Wanderers could now proudly call themselves "Champions" of their Amateur Cup Division.

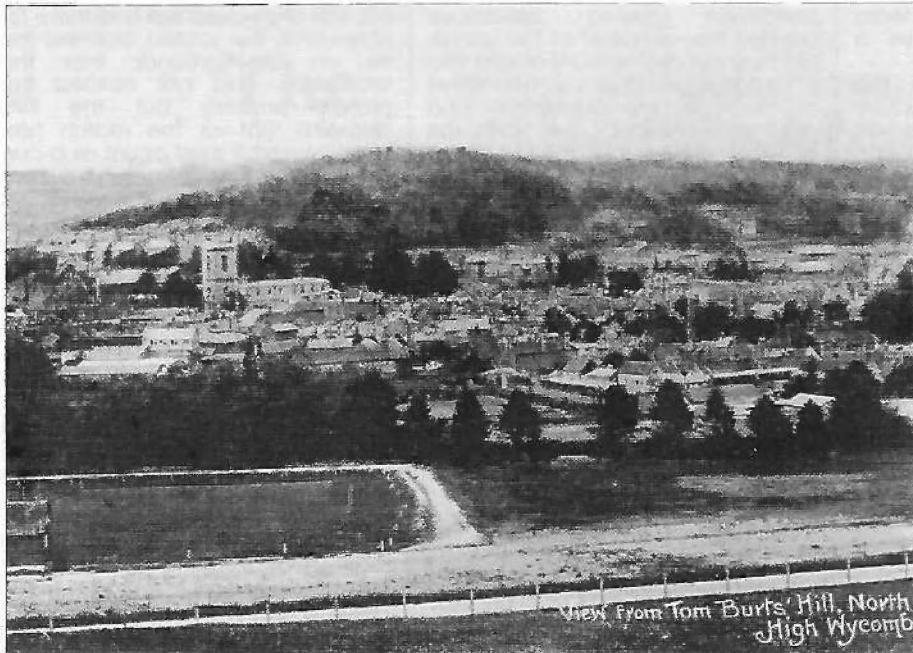
The next game was the return friendly at home to Marlow where a record crowd of nearly 2,000 witnessed a 4-2 win to Wycombe. It was noted that "the visiting players were evidently handicapped by the peculiar slope of the ground, and they did not keep their feet on the slippery turf anything like so well as the Wanderers".

Three matches in three days over the Christmas period began with a Boxing Day fixture against the First Scots Guards when a 1,200 crowd enjoyed an entertaining 3-3 draw. The following day the powerful Royal Ordnance, from the Southern League Division One, were the visitors. Wanderers had to include three players left hobbling from the previous day and it was no surprise that the professional team won albeit by three "milky" goals to one. The holiday programme at Loakes Park was completed by a 3-0 defeat of the Idlers, and so Wycombe completed the year with only three defeats in 20 games although two of these were in cup games.

The opening game of 1896 saw Wycombe record their biggest score as a senior club when Olympians were mercilessly despatched 11-1. The score was explained by "the fact that the visitors resorted to the almost defunct style of individual play". This is an interesting comment because football 20 to 30 years earlier was largely a game of players running as far as possible with the ball, until they lost possession. It was not until the 1880's that the passing or "combination" game became widespread and of course amateur clubs would be a little behind professional clubs in playing style. The Olympians, however, appear to have been a real relic from the past. Another large score followed, 9-0 against Peckham, with Buchanan netting six of the goals. The visitors were handicapped by arriving with only eight men, the others had missed the train, but three substitutes were found.

Wycombe then made their longest journey of the season, induced by a £10 guarantee, to Bristol to play Eastville Rovers (renamed Bristol Rovers two years later), then of the Western League. The 1,000 crowd witnessed a 2-2 draw.

The first game in February proved to be the biggest of the season, an Amateur Cup First Round Proper tie at Marlow. It attracted great interest in the two towns, especially as the



Loakes Park circa 1896

visitors were hailed as "Champions of Division Five of the Amateur Cup". The crowd of 2,700 was a record for the district, with takings of £74 16s 9d just eclipsing Marlow's previous record of £73 9s 3d against Middlesbrough Ironopolis in the F.A. Cup. About 1,500 were reckoned to have travelled from the "chaimaking metropolis". Marlow came close to taking the lead when their county player Handsomebody struck the bar with a 20 yard free kick. Shortly afterwards two of the rival players were "hugging one another on the ground" and to underline the passion of the occasion a number of flare ups between rival players took place including "a slight spill between Steven and Nicholls" and "some exchanges between Keen and Morton were not of a dangerous character". After 28 minutes Jennings put Wycombe into the lead but Shaw equalised for Marlow soon after. Five minutes before the break Buchanan restored the lead with a header - "the scene was almost indescribable, hats and sticks being thrown into the air, while the shouts were stentorian". Marlow quickly levelled matters after the break and the Riversiders' continued pressure paid off when Ellerton "notched up a clinking goal four minutes to time". The teams that day were:

Wycombe: J. Ball, A. G. P. Baines, H. Turner, F. C. Keen, R. Collier, G. Stevens, W. Lloyd, T. H. Randell, F. G. Jennings, F. W. Abbot, W. Buchanan.

Marlow: E. Wheeler, F. T. Handsomebody, G. Morton, E. Shaw, J. H. Lovell, J. G. Meakes, W. Davies, J. Janes, J. Ellerton, C. A. Shaw, F. O. Nicholls.

The following Saturday, at the home match with Barking Woodville, the Wycombe players were each presented with a silk cap in recognition of their Amateur Cup exploits that season. On them was the motto "W.W.F.C. 1895-96" and they were made in the combined colours of the Universities. The match itself was a dour 1-1 draw. Further victories at home followed against Erith (4-0), Reading Temperance (6-1 in the Maidenhead Norfolkian Cup), Old Saint Marks (7-1) and Hanwell (1-0). Then Loakes Park played host for the first time ever to a Football League Division One side, the renowned cup fighters West Bromwich Albion. A large guarantee of £30 was required to entice them down on a Saturday but this was amply covered by a record crowd of about 2,000, paying nearly £50. A guarantee fund collected by supporters in case of financial disaster was not needed. The fixture saw the first terracing erected at Loakes Park, albeit temporarily, as "Councillor Flint kindly lent a large quantity of boards for the spectators to stand on". Wycombe strengthened their side by including L. W. Reynolds of Oxford University and F. T. Handsomebody of Marlow. The home team unexpectedly took the lead with a header from Buchanan but the Throstles equalised before the break and, as expected, ran out easy winners, four goals to one, with "fatigue" overcoming the amateurs. West Bromwich went on to finish bottom of the League this season but avoided relegation due to success in the Test Matches. In the evening after the game the Club held one of their popular "smoking concerts" for the two teams in the

Nags Head, the Wanderers' headquarters. These functions were male only and were perhaps the forerunners to the current "Sportman's Dinners".

After a win against Leyton (5-2), a three match Easter programme saw a 6-0 drubbing of Kildare and on Easter Saturday a surprising 9-0 defeat of Maidenhead. It was 15 years since teams from the two towns had met but the scoreline was mainly due to the weakened Maidenhead team - on Easter Monday they were due to contest the Berks & Bucks Senior Cup Final against Wolverton. On the Tuesday a narrow 3-2 win was gained over Mr Lockyer's XI. The Wanderers fell to a surprise 3-2 defeat against The Vampires, blame being attributed to the forwards who "couldn't shoot for nuts". They made amends the following week beating London Caledonians 4-1,

(another team who arrived with eight men, substitutes having to be found). Wycombe's final match took place at Kidwells Park on Wednesday, 22nd April, in the Final of the Maidenhead Norfolkian Charity Cup against Maidenhead Norfolkian themselves. Their Secretary, prior to kick-off, had little hope of success saying, "Well, I suppose it is only a question as to how many goals we are to have run up against us". They surprised everyone, however, by beating Wycombe 2-1, to give their more illustrious opponents a disappointing end to what had been a very successful season. There was one more game played at Loakes Park that season, the Second replay of the Berks & Bucks Cup Final between Maidenhead and Wolverton on Monday, 27th April. The first two games had ended 2-2 (at Marlow in front of 3,278) and 1-1 (at Aylesbury). This time 1,237 saw another close game with Maidenhead finally winning 1-0 after extra time. It was indeed an honour for the Club in its first season at Loakes Park to stage the replayed tie.

The success of the first season at Loakes Park was reflected in the gate receipts of £320 17s 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d, which were more than double the previous season's take of £146 19s 3d. A small loss of £14 11s was made on the year due to the large amount of guarantees paid to visiting clubs (more than £182). But the club faced the future with great optimism. The application to join the Southern League, Division Two next season had already been accepted and, after only two seasons as a senior club, they would be competing in the Premier League in the South.

1895/96 - THE STATISTICS

DATE	OPPONENTS	COMPETITION	V	RESULT	APPROX. ATTEND.	RECEIPTS	GOALSCORERS
Sep 7	Parkgrove	Friendly	H	W 1-0			W. Buchanan
14	Romford	Friendly	H	W 6-4			F. Keen, Abbott, W. Buchanan, Jennings, Wooster, Lloyd
21	Old St Stephens	Friendly	H	W 3-1			Jennings, W. Buchanan, Wooster
28	Civil Service	Friendly	H	W 2-1			Hutchinson, Wooster
Oct 5	West Ham Garfield	Friendly	H	D 1-1			W. Buchanan
12	Wolverton L & N.W.R.	FAC 1Q	H	L 2-3	£30 14s 3d		Jennings, Abbott
19	Tottenham Hotspur (Res)	Friendly	A	W 4-3			W. Buchanan (2), Jennings Lloyd
26	Upton Park	Friendly	H	W 5-1			W. Buchanan (3), A. Lane, Abbott
28	Middlesbrough	Friendly	H	L 1-3	£16		Jennings
Nov 2	Newbury	FAAC 2Q	H	W 1-0	£15 11s 3d		Jennings
9	Chesham	B&BSC 1RP	A	L 1-2			W. Buchanan
16	University College Hosp.	Friendly	H	W 5-0			Putnam (3), Jennings, o.g.
23	Royal Scots Fusiliers	FAAC 3Q	H	W 9-0			W Buchanan (2), Abbott (3), Collier, Baines (2), Jennings
Dec 30	Marlow	Friendly	A	D 2-2	1500		Abbott, Randell
7	49th Regimental District	Friendly	H	W 5-0			W. Buchanan, White, J. Lane
14	2nd East Lancashire Reg.	FAAC 4Q	A	W 3-2			Jennings, W. Buchanan, Abbott
21	Marlow	Friendly	H	W 4-2	2000		Abbott (4)
26	1st Scots Guards	Friendly	H	D 3-3	1200		W. Buchanan, Jennings, Randell
27	Royal Ordnance	Friendly	H	L 1-3			H. Hearn
28	The Idlers	Friendly	H	W 3-0			Abbott (2), H. Hearn
Jan 4	Olympians	Friendly	H	W 11-1			Abbott (3), Lloyd, W. Buchanan (3), Jennings (4) o.g., W. Buchanan (6), Jennings, H. Webb
11	Peckham	Friendly	H	W 9-1			
18	Eastville Rovers	Friendly	A	D 2-2	1000		W. Buchanan, Abbott
25	Reading Redlands	MNCC 1RP	A	W 3-2			Randell, Janes
Feb 1	Marlow	FAAC 1RP	A	L 2-3	2700	£74 16s 9d	W. Buchanan, Jennings
8	Barking Woodville	Friendly	H	D 1-1			Randell
22	Erith United	Friendly	H	W 5-0			W. Buchanan (2), Abbott (2), Lloyd
29	Reading Temperance	MNCCSF	H	W 6-1			W. Buchanan (2), Keen, Jennings, Lloyd, Abbott
Mar 7	Old Saint Marks	Friendly	H	W 7-1			Jennings (2), Lloyd (3), Abbott, o.g
14	Hanwell	Friendly	H	W 1-0			Jennings
21	West Bromwich Albion	Friendly	H	L 1-4	2000	£50	W. Buchanan
28	Leyton	Friendly	H	W 5-2			R. Turner, Lloyd (3), Abbott
Apr 3	Kildare	Friendly	H	W 6-0			Lloyd, Abbott, Randell (3), R. Turner
4	Maidenhead	Friendly	H	W 9-0	800		R. Turner (3), W. Buchanan (3), Lloyd, Jennings, Collier
7	Mr. Lockyers' XI	Friendly	H	W 3-2			Lloyd (2), Abbott
11	Vampires	Friendly	H	L 2-3	£4 15s		W. Buchanan, C. King
18	London Caledonians "A"		H	W 4-1			Lloyd, Jennings (3)
22	Maidenhead Norfolkians	MNCCF	H	L 1-2			o.g.

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THE ADAMS FAMILY CONNECTION

by Jack Adams



Frank Adams presents the Deeds of Loakes Park to the Club

Frank Adams was born in the village of Downley, near High Wycombe on 5th September 1891. He left Priory Road School at the age of 12 and after completing his photographic apprenticeship he was soon playing with Wycombe Wanderers in the Great Western Suburban League.

In 1912 Frank joined the Isthmian League club, Shepherds Bush, who then played at Loftus Road, now QPR's ground. This proved a good move and a successful season ended with a tour overseas with matches against Cologne, Essen, Duisburg and Bilbao Athletic where Frank scored the only goal of the match before the King and Queen of Spain.

On demobilization Frank returned home to lead a club revival which brought the Spartan League Championship home twice and saw Wycombe (and Wimbledon) gain acceptance for membership of the Isthmian League.

Before his retirement in 1928 Frank Adams won representative honours with F.A. XI, Isthmian League, Berks & Bucks F.A. and Middlesex Wanderers. Following his playing retirement, Frank was appointed a member of the Club Committee and had the satisfaction of seeing the Wanderers enjoy probably their finest season, 1931, when they won the Amateur Cup.

Away from the football field Frank was also proving himself a success in the world of business with his sports goods and photographic business operating from a shop on Oxford Road, High Wycombe. This success was to be to the benefit of Wycombe Wanderers too.

Since 1897 Wycombe Wanderers tenure of Loakes Park had been by virtue of a leasehold interest from Lord Carrington. The underlying insecurity of this situation had troubled the Club and, in particular, Frank Adams and as the Second World War was coming to a close in 1945, he began negotiating with Lord Carrington for the purchase on his own account of the freehold of Loakes Park. Two years later, having acquired the freehold, Frank Adams generously gifted Loakes Park to Wycombe Wanderers. The deeds were formally presented to the Club on 19th April 1947, before the Isthmian League match versus

Corinthian Casuals, and Frank declared in his speech: "If future generations obtain the same enjoyment out of Loakes Park as it has given me in the past, then this gift will have been worthwhile". Frank Adams had the honour of Patron bestowed upon him in gratitude for this act. The only condition to the gift of Loakes Park was that it be held "in trust" for the purpose of playing amateur football so long as Wycombe Wanderers were in existence and that if the club dissolved, then the land would be vested in the Local Authority for sporting activities.

The Trustees' role was a passive one until 1968 when the Health Authority sought discussions with the club for the expansion of Wycombe Hospital. Two years later, a consultative document showing plans of the extension over the whole of Loakes Park was produced and was strongly opposed by the Trustees who realised the difficulty of finding another site for the football club. The Trustees felt it prudent, however, to seek out possible sites and over the course of the next decade discussions were held with several developers with planning application being submitted (and refused) for a site at Four Ashes, Terriers. Eventually, at the suggestion of the Planning Officer, Hillbottom Road was considered and despite a number of setbacks along the way, the Trustees negotiated a deal with developers which has led Wycombe Wanderers to Adams Park - named after our benefactor, Frank Adams.

Sadly, Frank Adams died shortly after his 90th birthday in 1981 but he knew his fellow Trustees would secure the future of the club at Loakes Park or elsewhere. Frank was survived by two sons - Don who was a rugby enthusiast and who played for the Harlequins, and Jack, a lifelong Wycombe supporter who as a baby, was regularly pushed to Loakes Park in his pram by his mother. Jack succeeded Bill Hayter as Trustee in 1970 and, as a Chartered Surveyor, became heavily involved with the ground relocation negotiations until the dissolution of the Trustees when Wycombe Wanderers was formed as a limited company. Subsequently, Jack Adams had the honour of Patron bestowed upon him in which position he still remains with the Club today.

The Adams family name will remain in the Club for the foreseeable future by virtue of its new home - Adams Park.



Despite these successes Frank Adams returned to his beloved Wycombe Wanderers and was elected Captain for the 1914-15 season. War broke out however, and being a territorial soldier Frank was sent to France with 1st Bucks Battalion. During the war he transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and at the end of hostilities he played a number of matches for the RAF team.



Len Worley.



John Delaney and Ted Powell.

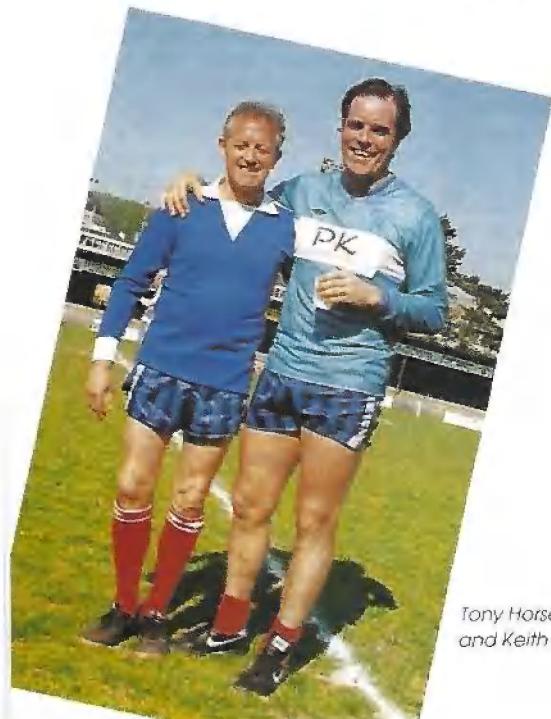


John Maskell.



Dick Cox (left back) and Arthur Greenwell (left half and Captain) from the 1931 Amateur Cup Winning team.

REMEMBER ME?



Tony Horseman and Keith Searle.



(Left to right) Noel Ashford, Keith Samuels, Larry Pritchard, Barry Baker, (Keith Barrett in background)

PLAYERS OF THE SEVENTIES AND EIGHTIES

by Brian Lee

Whilst it is important to look forward, particularly with a new ground, it is fun to look back at some of the influential players of the last two decades.

The word "character" is bandied about as someone who stands out, has distinctive features or special qualities and is noted for their individuality. On arriving at a new club the inherited characters soon emerge, maybe for different reasons, but two such people were here when I joined the club in the sixties and stayed throughout the seventies - **John Maskell** and **Tony Horseman**. Both had prodigious playing records, one for saving goals and one for scoring goals. It was disappointing that neither of them wished to use their talents in representing their countries. They did not want to get involved in the international scene although "Bodger" did make an appearance for Great Britain. The national loss was no doubt our gain. The third outstanding character on my arrival was **Jock Sheppard**, the trainer cum groundsman with a french polishing background! He was, and indeed is, so passionately involved with the team that no-one who played at the club will forget his cheerfulness, willing help and the fun he engendered in the dressing room.

When people reflect on the past they do so with the experience of the present and the most influential signing I made was **John Delaney**, not necessarily for his ability but for what he helped to start. In his own right, of course, he proved to be an excellent defender who was a dominant header of the ball in both penalty areas. He graced his country's shirt with both skill and honour, one notable feat being his headed hat-trick against Italy. He was somewhat of a late developer when he arrived at Loakes Park and he excelled as a captain by example.

If John Delaney was an influential player on the field then **John Reardon** was a fierce ally off the field as assistant and friend - and what is more he is still

around. John's role throughout the years at this club has been one of high standards, direct honesty, a caring attitude towards people and a Welsh passion for the game but a distinct dislike for people who wear black clothes.

The most complete player in this era, must for me be **Larry Pritchard**. Not only was he an all round creative and combative player, who represented his country many times but he was probably one of the most respected players of his time. He was ambitious, competitive, reliable and was a model player and person both on and off the field.

The greatest feat though would be by **Len Worley** who, as an amateur, played in the First Division for Tottenham Hotspur in their great side in the early sixties.

No reflections would be complete without naming a "best" team and wondering how they would do now; therefore, in order to provoke discussion but without wishing to offend many, many good players I hereby stick my neck out!

The 1970's Select XI with 43 substitutes! Maskell: Powell, Delaney, Suddaby, Lailey: Pritchard, Reardon, Holifield: Swain, Searle, Horseman.

They have good defensive qualities, creativity and skill, lack some pace but have good finishing prospects!

During that time a number of players left us and went into The Football League, in fact the Wycombe League side is also quite strong! John Pratt (Reading): Paul Fuschillo (Blackpool), John Delaney (Bournemouth), Peter Suddaby (Blackpool), Tony Price (Leicester City): Alan Gane (Hereford), Viv Busby (Luton Town), Mick Mallows (Portsmouth): Steve Perrin (Crystal Palace), Ian Pearson (Millwall), Ken Swain (Chelsea).

As the seventies faded into history so did the "amateur" status of teams like Wycombe and the stigma of professionalism that almost swamped the old

corinthian spirit around the Isthmian League. Having been the last to accept substitutes in the late sixties, the Isthmians were not in favour of calling everybody "players", either "contracted" or "non-contracted" but eventually had to succumb or be left behind. The F.A. Amateur Cup went forever and those who earlier had introduced the FA Trophy for semi-professional clubs outside The Football League must have been reading their teacups as the Trophy took over. It has never matched the excitement or crowds that watched FA Amateur Cup matches and to a great extent is still trying to establish itself. It does not command the same respect from the media for instance that the fight for promotion within the present Pyramid League system provides to progress up the ladder and into the Football League.

The eighties, however produced some fine players and teams at Loakes Park and it will provide an opportunity for debate by naming another "best" team. Once more I stick my neck out!

The 1980's Select XI with a further 43 substitutes! Granville: Birdseye, Barrett, Kerr, Hill: Kennedy, Bressington, Ashford: Link, Evans, West.

They have good defensive base upon which to attack with plenty of opportunities to create chances for a lot of goals "upfront".

The one regret I have in looking back is to ask where they are now and what they are doing for football, the game that gave them all the opportunity to show their skills and develop their talents? I am sure that they could have stayed involved but such are the distractions that nearly all are lost to the game. The game needs people like these old players to stay involved for all the youngsters who, we hope, will follow them in the future. Wherever they are I am sure they will remember their days at Wycombe Wanderers with pride and satisfaction - we do.

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL COMES OF AGE....

by Paul Newman of "The Independent"

The history of non-league football is littered with the names of famous clubs who today live only in the memory. In 1965, who would have thought that come 1990 the only place for the likes of Guildford City, Hastings United, Romford, Walthamstow Avenue, Bedford Town and Oxford City would be in the game's history books?

Professional football has changed much in the last 25 years, yet in comparison with the non-league game it has virtually stood still. The Football League still has its four divisions, the FA Cup remains the game's most glamorous prize and the likes of Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester United are still its biggest names.

Non-league football, in contrast, has lost its most famous competition, the FA Amateur Cup and has had to adapt to the scrapping of the amateur-professional divide and has completely reorganised itself into the present pyramid structure.

In such a changed and changing world it should perhaps be no surprise that some clubs have fallen by the wayside; the conditions demand enterprise and initiative, but sport in this country tends, by nature, to be conservative.

The non-league clubs that have prospered in recent years have tended to be those that have been prepared to adapt to their changing circumstances. It can be no coincidence that Jim Thompson, the non-league game's most dynamic and progressive character of the 1980s, has been responsible for arguably the greatest achievement, that of taking Maidstone United into the Football League. Thompson, who more than anyone else brought about the creation of the Alliance Premier League (now the GM Vauxhall Conference) and automatic promotion to the Fourth Division, saw the need, not only at club level but also nationally, for change and flexibility.

The Southern and Northern Premier Leagues made enormous sacrifices to form the Alliance, but their reward is the strongest and healthiest competition - the

Conference - in the history of non-league football, and although what were their best clubs may now be playing elsewhere, their own competitions are thriving, thanks in large part to the influx of progressive clubs from their own feeder leagues.

The changing nature of the game in recent years has posed an even greater challenge to what were two of the greatest bastions of amateur football, the Isthmian and Northern Leagues. Their response and subsequent contrasting fortunes demonstrate vividly the need for progressive attitudes.

The Skol Northern League has paid a high price for its continued refusal to join the pyramid. Its clubs play in decaying grounds, playing standards have declined and attendances slumped to embarrassingly low levels. Some of the more progressive clubs have resigned in frustration in order to join leagues that belong to the pyramid.

Although a little belated, the decision of the Isthmian League (now the Vauxhall League) to join the pyramid has earned the same reward as that of its parallel feeder competitions. The Vauxhall League is a healthy, expanding competition in which standards - particularly off the field - have risen greatly.

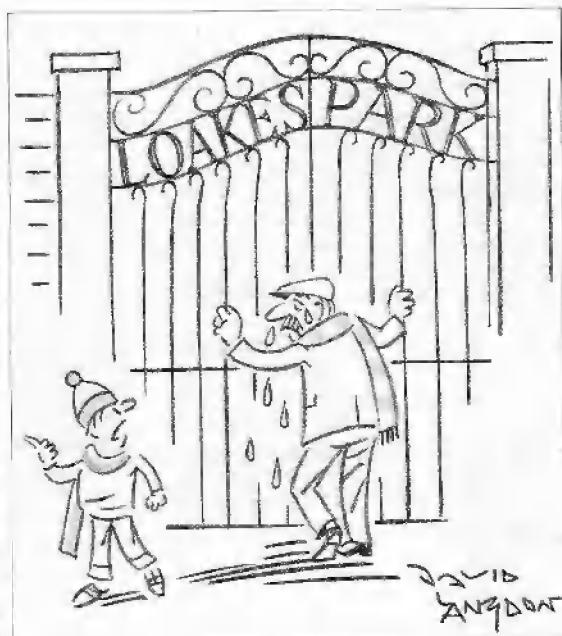
The best illustration of the comparison between the Vauxhall and Skol Northern Leagues is to look at their top clubs of 20 years ago. In 1970, Enfield, Wycombe Wanderers and Sutton United topped the Isthmian League; since then each club has prospered and all three (even despite Enfield's relegation last season) can be regarded as among the country's leading non-league clubs.

The top teams in the Northern League in 1970 were Evenwood Town, Whitley Bay and

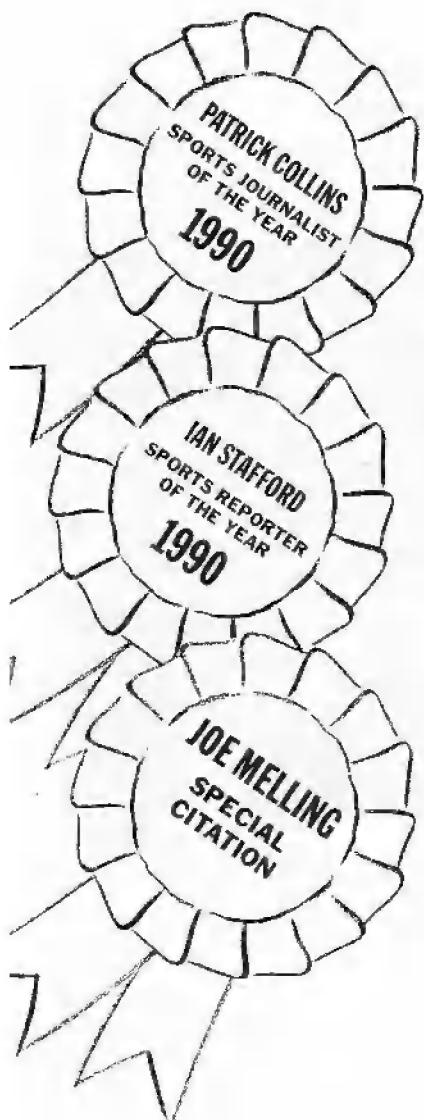
Blyth Spartans. Blyth enjoyed national fame in the F.A. Cup in the 1970s and Whitley Bay's fortunes have taken a turn for the better since their switch to the HFS Loans (Northern Premier) League, but in other respects there can be no comparison with the subsequent achievements of their 1970 Isthmian League counterparts.

Enfield, who jumped ship before the Isthmian link with the Alliance was formed, and Sutton and Wycombe, who both chose promotion to the Alliance when many advised against it, all needed vision and ambition to make their historic moves. All three have recognised the need to improve their grounds - no more so than Wycombe in their move to a new home - to involve themselves more closely with the local community and to strive for commercial success off the field.

Wycombe can take pride in their long history and in particular in their role as one of the great clubs in the halcyon days of amateur football. Yet in future years their willingness to adapt to the enormous changes that the game has undergone in the last 25 years may be seen as an even greater achievement.



"Come on, Grandad, or we'll be late for Adams Park."



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March 1991

Now the pitch is overgrown, the stands are crumbling and the bulldozers have been in. Where crowds once cheered is now a car park belonging to the hospital. Whatever memories we choose to recall, Loakes Park will live with us for ever, along with the moments of joy and despair witnessed during the time spent there supporting Wycombe Wanderers.

CUP MEMORIES

Alan Hutchinson reviews 70 years at Loakes Park

For 96 years Loakes Park was the home of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club and their famous sloping pitch at the foot of a steep hill became the graveyard of many an opponent and their Cup dreams. We will now look at some of the most memorable matches seen at this famous old ground, through the amateur days of the twenties to the seventies, to the non-league football of the seventies and eighties, until 1990 when the shutters finally went up at Loakes Park.

Twenties Champions

Immediately after the first world war, Wycombe won the Spartan League championship in consecutive years and at the end of the 1920 - 21 season they made an application to join the Isthmian League.

They were accepted, along with Wimbledon, the following season, 1921/22. A step up in class from the Spartan League to the Premier League of the amateur game saw both support and "gates" rise dramatically. New and exciting clubs such as The Casuals, Dulwich Hamlet, London Caledonians, Ilford,

Leytonstone and Nunhead were seen at Loakes Park, replacing the familiar local sides Slough United, Chesham United, Aylesbury United and Great Western Railway.

1921 saw Wycombe enjoy a successful run in the F.A. Amateur

Cup with a 3-2 home win in the First Round against Signal Service before meeting Barnet at Loakes Park in Round Two. In a thrilling game Wycombe found themselves two down in the first-half before climbing back from the dead to lead 3-2.



Barnet equalised before Tommy Jackman, in heavy mist that enveloped the ground, got the winner at the hospital end to take Wycombe through 4-3.

In the Third Round they beat Tufnell Park, the previous season's finalists, 2-1 at Edmonton and drew Loftus Albion (Yorkshire) away in the Quarter-Final. The journey was such in those days that the team left on Thursday morning for an overnight stay in Saltburn before going onto Loftus on Friday. Total expenses for the team and officials were £80 for two nights away. Wycombe were tipped as likely finalists but the long journey and home advantage saw Loftus go through 2-0 in front of 8,000 supporters. Strangely enough, Bishop Auckland reached the Semi-Final that season and were to crop up again and again during Wycombe's various attempts to win the Amateur Cup.

Thirties Legends

By season 1929 - 30 new names had arrived at the Club and these men were to become legends when winning the Amateur Cup at Highbury the following April, 1931. Our story begins with the biggest game the Club had staged at Loakes Park at that point in their history - the Quarter-Final of the F.A. Amateur Cup on Saturday, 28th February 1931. The game was a replay from the previous Saturday when Wycombe had achieved a very creditable 1-1 draw against Metropolitan Police at Imber Court. A crowd approaching 12,000, the largest ever at Wycombe in those days, crammed into the ground for the visit of the Spartan League Champions.

Urged on by the vast crowd, Wycombe took the game to the Police but it was the "Peelers" who were ahead before equality was restored when Fred Braisher put Wycombe level ten minutes before half-time. In the second-half it was the strength of the Wycombe forwards who dominated the Police defence. Centre-forward, Doug Vernon, put Wycombe through to their first Amateur Cup Semi-Final with a brilliant goal. He collected the ball just inside the visitors half and dribbled past five opponents before calmly placing the ball into the net, sending Wycombe to meet Woking at Ilford for a place in the Final and into the history books forever.



The 1931 Amateur Cup Final winning goal.

Another replay, this time against Gillingham in the F.A. Cup of 1932, saw a mid-week Wednesday afternoon crowd of 8,000 turn up. The entire male population of Wycombe had left their factories and offices with shops posting notices, "Gone to the football" in their windows. The match was played in awful weather conditions on 30th November after the 1-1 draw at Gillingham the previous Saturday when Wycombe had covered themselves in glory. Excitement for the crowd was instant when the Wycombe full-back, Dick Cox, banged the ball into his own net in the opening seconds. Mid-way through the half Bill Brown equalised with a left foot volley, and five minutes later total silence descended as Fred Braisher was awarded a penalty. His crashing shot put Wycombe 2-1 ahead at half-time. It was apparent that the professionals' extra skill and fitness would take over in the second-half and goals on 60 and 70 minutes and the dying seconds took Gillingham through 4-2. But then, what else could have attracted such a crowd to a hillside on such a miserable afternoon in November 1932?

Forties - Gift of a Lifetime

Season 1945/46 brought great relief to all those supporters starved of football during the war years. Large crowds and a craving for entertainment kept Loakes Park to the forefront of local interest. Although the Club did not make any notable progress in either the F.A. Cup or F.A. Amateur Cup during those resumption years they did reach four consecutive Berks & Bucks Senior Cup Finals, winning three in 1947, 1949 and 1950, and losing to Chesham United in 1948. The real highlight of the post-war '40s, however, was the presentation of Loakes Park to Wycombe Wanderers by former Captain Frank Adams.

Fifties Glory

As with all amateur clubs the war years had taken their toll and rebuilding a good side had taken time, but by the '49 - '50 season Wycombe were on the road to Cup glory again. In the Amateur Cup they now faced the strong northern men from Crook Town in the Second Round at Loakes Park. Some 13,000 squeezed into the ground for a real pot-boiler that saw Wycombe go through with a 65 minute Jock McCullum goal after a number of first-half chances had been squandered. From a great ball by Ken Butler, Jock lofted the ball over the goalkeeper's head and watched the crowd behind the goal almost drag the ball into the net with a huge intake of breath. The Third Round brought Dulwich Hamlet to Loakes Park and another 13,000 saw

Johnny Blizzard, Jock McCullum and Peter Birdseye score the goals to take Wycombe through 3-1. The Fourth Round created a ground record of 15,850 when St. Albans came to Loakes Park on 25th February 1950. After a dour 20 minutes it was Jock McCullum again, who brought the game to life with a goal followed by a second from Ken Butler five minutes later. Although St. Albans reduced the arrears before half-time, further goals from Jock and Henri Mikrut in the second-half sent Wycombe to meet Bishop Auckland at Brentford in the Semi-Final.

Two seasons later, in early February 1952, 12,500 were at Loakes Park for the visit of Marine, Liverpool for the Third Round F.A. Amateur Cup. A penalty from Dennis Atkins after 29 minutes took Wycombe into the Quarter-Final where Barnet from the Athenian League, won 2-0 at Underhill.

In 1955 the great Pegasus side, coached by Joe Mercer, who had twice won the F.A. Amateur Cup in the early 50's, came to Loakes Park in the Quarter-Final. A desperate effort by 40 schoolboys, myself included, cleared the pitch of snow to enable the game to go ahead in front of 10,000 spectators. Wycombe pounded the Pegasus goal throughout only to be thwarted by a goalkeeper the press called a young boy - Mike Pinner. It remained 0-0. The following week Wycombe won 2-1 in the dying moments of the replay with a Jack Tomlin header, to go to Doncaster to meet Bishop Auckland once again in the Semi-Final. A total of 6,500 fans travelled on six special trains and many coaches for the match which Wycombe lost 1-0. For the next three seasons crowds of 10,000 plus were not unusual - Burton Albion attracted 13,000 for an F.A. Cup tie in 1955, Margate 11,400 in 1956 and for the visit of barefooted Uganda in August 1956, 8,000 turned up to see Wycombe win 10-1. Later in that season Wycombe started along the road to their only Wembley appearance so far. A 3-3 draw at Ilford on a quagmire of a pitch in the Fourth Round of the F.A. Amateur Cup meant a replay at Loakes Park the following Saturday. A crowd of 15,500 saw Frank Smith and Cliff Trott score the two goals that qualified Wycombe to meet Corinthian Casuals at Highbury in the Semi-Final. A 4-2 victory at Highbury, despite playing with only 10 fit men for the last 25 minutes, took the Wanderers to Wembley where they met old adversaries Bishop Auckland once again, losing this time, 3-1.

Two seasons later it started all over again when Wycombe were drawn away at Barnet in Round Three of the F.A. Amateur Cup. A 2-2 draw after Wycombe had led 2-0 at half-time meant a Loakes Park



The 1957 Amateur Cup Final Squad

Back row:- S. Cann (Coach), G. Truett, F. Lawson, M. Wieks, D. Syrett, J. Truett, J. Moring, F. Westley (Captain), W. Hayter (Secretary).
 Front Row:- L. Worley, C. Trott, P. Bates, J. Tomlin, F. Smith, D. Atkins.

replay. The draw had paired the winners at home to Bishop Auckland (yet again!) and the population of High Wycombe just couldn't wait for the replay. Wycombe had not lost for 16 months at Loakes Park, surely now, the defeat of both Barnet and Bishops at home, would make Wembley a certainty. However, a goal from Reg Finch after 20 minutes sent Wycombe crashing from the competition. A very sad end to an era that had contained many memorable Loakes Park moments.

Sixties Sagas

The sixties saw the arrival of a new era which saw the departure of coach Sid Cann who had achieved so much during the glorious 50's. New men came and went without

too much success - Colin McDonald lasted three days, then Graham Adams and Don Welch followed before former player Barry Darvill took over the reigns.

The F.A. Cup of 1960 saw a great result against Wisbech, which took Wycombe to Watford for the Second Round, where they lost 5-1. Then a battling defeat in 1961, by Kettering of the Southern League. The next major event for Wycombe was the opening of the floodlights on 25th September 1963 against Enfield. By this time crowds had dwindled as television had invaded every home, and the same familiar clubs season after season added to the lack of enthusiasm. However, over 3,000 people saw a fast and exciting game under the new lights.

turned on by Club Patron, Mr. Frank Adams. Wycombe went on to win 3-1.

The mid '60s will be remembered for the marathon F.A. Cup encounter with Bedford Town, now no longer in existence. Wycombe were drawn at home and in front of 7,600 fans scored a dramatic goal through Keith Samuels in the last five minutes to earn a 1-1 draw. The replay at Bedford was even more dramatic with the Blues leading 3-2 in extra time with goals by Paul Bates, Tony Horseman and Les Merrick, when the referee awarded a harsh penalty to Bedford in the last minute. A very lucky Bedford ended 3-3 with a second trip to Wycombe the following Saturday. More drama yet as 9,000 saw another 1-1 draw.

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Referee Arthur Diamond abandoned the game and refused extra time owing to a waterlogged pitch caused by torrential rain throughout the 90 minutes. It was back to Bedford on Wednesday and after a valiant display Wycombe went out 3-2 after 6½ hours of football watched by a total of 32,000.

In December 1968 Barry Darvill resigned as Team Manager and Brian Lee was appointed, meeting the players for the first time on Boxing Day. His appointment was to herald the most successful period in Wanderers' history winning three Isthmian Championships, three Runners-up spots, with the lowest position 4th. Many exciting cup runs came along. In the Amateur Cup Wycombe were within sight of the car park at Wembley on three consecutive occasions under Brian Lee until the barrier came down at the very last hurdle.

Seventies Splendour

The first of the Quarter-Final opportunities came in 1970 when drawn at home to old adversaries who we met at the same stage in 1950 - St. Albans City. Just under 10,000 saw Wycombe denied by goalkeeper Tony McKie while St. Albans helped themselves to goals in the 26th and 63rd minutes to end the

Wembley dream. One year later we were in the same position at home in the Quarter-Final, this time to Skelmersdale United. Wycombe were very firm favourites to take the Cup, and for 55 minutes it was impossible to believe how Skelmersdale had survived. A goal against the run of play turned the entire match and Wycombe fell like a boxer with a glass jaw, by 3-0 to the misery of 10,200 stunned supporters. A protest over goalkeeper Peter Frankish, who was drafted into the Skelmersdale side at the very last moment, was turned down by the F.A. and the Lancashire side went on to win the Cup.

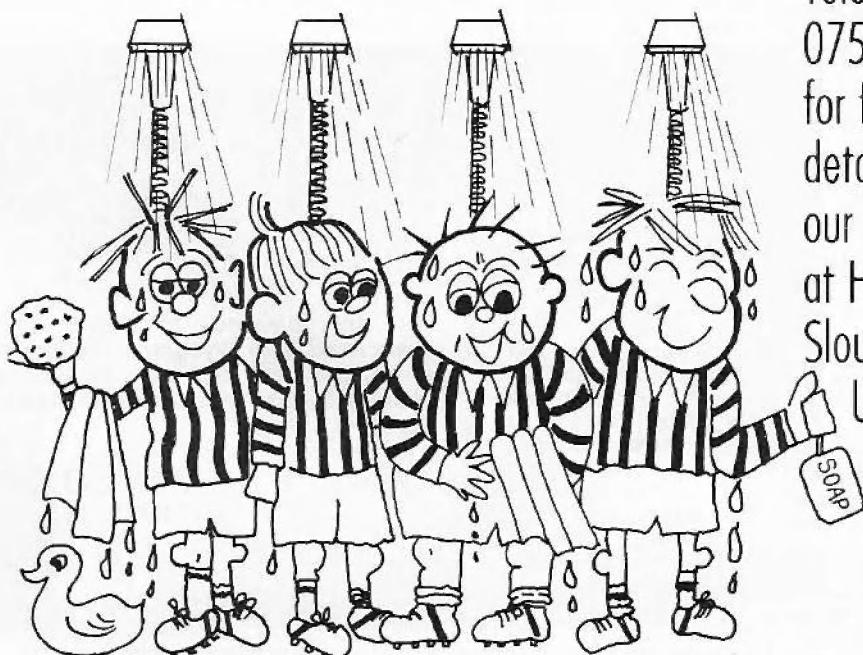
For the third consecutive season Wycombe reached the F.A. Amateur Cup Quarter-Final and their luck held when they were drawn at home yet again. Their opponents were Hayes, the club Wycombe beat 1-0 at Highbury in 1931 when winning the Cup for the only time. Hayes had put together a strong side and came to attack from the start. The only goal of the game was scored on 72 minutes, a well-timed header by Keith Searle who had previously been rejected by Hayes. The crowd was 5,500 and Jim Kelman, who was to manage the Wanderers in the late 80's, played for Hayes that day. So Wycombe had progressed to the Semi-Finals for

the first time in fifteen years where they would meet Hendon at Brentford. But again it was a case of "so near yet so far" as Hendon won 2-1.

The following season it was the F.A. Cup that attracted the attention when Newport County came to Loakes Park in the First Round. In front of 6,000 spectators Wycombe had the greater share of the play in the first-half before two goals from Steve Perrin and another by Dylan Evans, all in the second half, put Wycombe into the Second Round with another home tie against Peterborough United. All the propaganda relating to the sloping pitch was used in an attempt to unnerve the Fourth Division leaders, but their Manager, Noel Cantwell, the ex-Manchester United half-back, did his homework well. Although Wycombe were on level terms, 1-1, at half-time, two second-half goals for Peterborough ended the campaign in front of 10,400 spectators.

Sunday football came to Loakes Park for the first and only time when, during a 3-day working week, a League fixture was arranged to suit both sides. One of the largest crowds for a League fixture for some years, 2,400, turned up to see Wanderers thump Corinthian Casuals 7-0.

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1974 - 75 will always go down as the "Glory Season" when Wycombe battled through to the Third Round of the F.A. Cup to take on Jack Charlton's Division One leaders, Middlesbrough - the first time in the Club's history that they had entertained a First Division side at Loakes Park. The Cup run had started with a fixture at Marlow in the Qualifying Round way back in September before making it through to be drawn at home in Round Two against Third Division Bournemouth. The Wycombe home record looked awesome. They had not lost at Loakes Park for two years and were champions of the Isthmian League three times out of the last four. Bournemouth did not play well and although they took Wycombe back to Dean Court after a 1-1 draw it all went wrong for them when Wycombe turned on a great display to win 2-1 and earn the right to meet Middlesbrough. Cup fever possessed the town for two weeks prior to the game. The police had set a crowd limit of 12,000 for the match, ITV Sport had arranged to cover the tie, and BBC Radio, Tyne Tees media and every national newspaper wanted a seat in the stand. This was to be the game of a lifetime for Wycombe. Those not lucky enough to get a ticket clung to gasometers, perched precariously on roofs and gathered on the hill above the ground to watch. Middlesbrough found the atmosphere daunting, the Wycombe midfield got hold of everything and half-time arrived with no score. Chances were few and far between and the only clear cut chance fell to the Wycombe Captain, Alan Phillips who got his head to a Terry Reardon corner and sent the ball careering into the side netting. At the final whistle with the score still 0-0 the Middlesbrough players left the field sporting huge grins of relief. Wycombe lost the replay in the dying minute at Aysome Park the following Wednesday and trudged off the pitch to a standing ovation from over 30,000 admiring supporters. Another memorable moment at Loakes Park during this period included the title winning goal by Keith Searle in the last game of season 1974 - 75 against Dagenham, to pip Enfield by 0.1 of a goal. The following season Monza of Italy came and gave us a very entertaining evening with Wycombe winning the Anglo Italian Trophy 2-1 on aggregate. At the end of 1975 Brian Lee announced his retirement. He had been the most successful manager in the Club's history. Former player Ted Powell took charge. In 1976 the F.A. Cup once again threw up a fascinating clash when Reading came to Loakes Park in the Second Round of the competition. The game was played on a hard,

frost-covered pitch and when Robin Friday scored twice in the first-half for the visitors the game looked over. A relentless bombardment of the Reading goal in the second-half was rewarded on 68 minutes when Ian Pearson pulled one back for Wycombe. Other chances were missed however, as Wycombe unluckily went out deserving at least a replay. By March 1977 Ted Powell had gone and John Reardon was appointed Manager until May 1978 when Andy Williams replaced him, only to go out with the 70's, which heralded the arrival of former Queens Park Rangers star, Mike Keen.

Eighties Emergence

Having seen the F.A. Trophy introduced in 1975 with the disappearance of Amateur football, the early 80's saw more changes taking place in non-League football. The formation of the Alliance Premier League was to become the basis for future promotion and relegation between non-League and the Fourth Division of the Football League. Wycombe did not take part in the original Alliance formation but when the pyramid system was introduced providing promotion and relegation from the Isthmian League, the Southern League and the Northern League, greater opportunities for many more clubs opened up. The 80's started with good F.A. Cup prospects when Wycombe drew Fourth Division Bournemouth at home in the First Round. This contest produced an interesting confrontation

between the two managers, Alec Stock of Bournemouth who, over 30 years previously had masterminded non-League Yeovil's sensational win over Sunderland, and Wycombe's Mike Keen, who for thirteen years played for Queens Park Rangers and Luton under Stock. Much play was made of the previous F.A. Cup clash between Wycombe and Bournemouth but there was no such luck for the Isthmian side as the Cherries scored twice in the first-half and added another in the second to win 3-0 and make sure there was no repeat of the 1974 meeting.

After a number of seasons without any success in the F.A.

Trophy, 1981 - 82 brought a change of fortune. At Easter Wycombe had the prospect of winning the F.A. Trophy, Isthmian League, Hitachi Cup and the County Cup, but within the space of 12 days everything had gone. The one prestige game was the second leg of the Trophy Semi-Final against Altrincham, after the ghost of Bishop Auckland had finally been laid to rest 4-1 at Loakes Park in the Third Round. Having achieved a 1-1 draw in the first leg against Altrincham (away), the second match attracted 5,000 to see Wycombe lose 0-3 on a hard, dusty pitch. Unfortunately injuries to four key players in the first leg cost Wycombe another chance at Wembley.

1984 was the Club's centenary season and Mike Keen departed to be replaced by Paul Bence. A special match was arranged to celebrate the Centenary and attractive opponents were sought to visit Loakes Park as part of the celebrations. Leicester City were selected for this fixture as they too were celebrating their centenary. A First Division side in those days, they had a young Gary Lineker partnering Steve Lynex up front. The game was poorly attended, only 1,300 turning up for such a prestigious occasion. The entire match was played in a low-key atmosphere after an early injury to John Richardson of Wycombe who was stretchered off with torn ligaments - the result, 0-0.

Legal Problems? Just pass them to us.



We are pleased to have been associated with Wycombe Wanderers at Loakes Park and look forward to sharing in their successes at Adams Park.

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